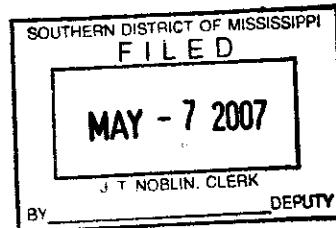




## United for Children - United for Change

May 4, 2007



Mr. J.T. Noblin, Clerk  
 United States District Court for the  
 Southern District of Mississippi  
 United States Courthouse  
 245 East Capitol Street  
 Jackson, MS 39201

I send this mutually written letter in the name of and with the permission of the Coalition for Children's Welfare regarding the **Olivia Y., et al, v. Barbour lawsuit**. This group came together slightly four years ago (prior to this present administration) united in their concern for the children in Mississippi who consistently rank last in almost every measurement of child well being -- Family Economic Well Being; Health; Safety and Behavioral Well Being; Educational Attainment; Community Connectedness; Social Relationships; Emotional and Spiritual Well Being.

It seems the plight of our children does not get better in these areas but too often becomes worse. In areas where we have made improvements, so have other States. Our improvements do not move us beyond "band-aiding" and have not provided lasting or consistent results. We write this statement so the Court knows our concern and our willingness to support any and all efforts the Mississippi Department of Human Services makes to move beyond maintaining a system which has been broken for decades.

Many of our agencies provide highly professional services to Mississippi children and their families. We are both qualified and willing to provide consultation and support as negotiations move forward. We believe these negotiations provide a ray of hope which we have not seen since the early 80's. This is a wonderful opportunity for this Administration to make a significant positive impact on our serving children and families. We would very much like to be a part of that effort.

Sincerely,

*Sister Donna Gunn*  
 Sister Donna Gunn  
 for  
 (see next sheet)

## MEMBERS OF COALITION FOR CHILDREN'S WELFARE

Catholic Diocese of Jackson  
Catholic Charities of Jackson  
Children's Defense Fund  
(Southern Region)  
Citizens for Quality Education  
Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities  
Congregations for Children  
Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi  
Friends of Children of MS (Head Start)  
Luckett Maternal and Child Health --  
Advocacy & Consulting Services  
LIFE (Living Independently for  
Everyone)  
MS Deaf-Blind Project  
MS Chapter – Natl. Assoc. of  
Social Workers  
MS Conference of the United Methodist Church  
MS Families as Allies for  
Children's Mental Health  
MS Families for Kids  
MS Human Service Coalition  
MS Low Income Child Care Initiative  
MS Religious Leadership Conference  
MS Youth Justice Project  
Parents United Together  
Public Policy Center of MS  
Unitarian Universalist Church/Jackson  
Walker Foundation

There are additional groups who belong to this Coalition,  
but their Boards do not allow those names to be used in taking a public stand

Copy:

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Children's Rights  
330 Seventh Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, New York 10001

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